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NETWORK A MEETING RECORD

Network A Plenary Session
March 10-12, 1997, Sintra, Portugal

Participants

Friedrich Plank (Austria)
Aletta Grisay (Belgium)
Luc Van de Poele (Belgium)
Christine Brusselman-Dehairs (Beglium)
C. Jean Britton (Canada)
Dianne Pennock (Canada)
Jana Straková (Czech Republic)
Reijo Laukkanen (Finland)
Jacqueline Levasseur (France)
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Judit Kádár-Fülöp (Hungary)
Thomas Kellaghan (Ireland)
Chiara Croce (Italy)
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Jules Peschar (Netherlands)
Arnold Spee (Netherlands)
Marit Granheim (Norway)
Gertrudes Amaro (Portugal)
Birgetta Fredander (Sweden)
Heinz Gilomen (Switzerland)
Michael Richardson (United Kingdom)
Eugene Owen (United States, Chair)
Jay Moskowitz (United States)
Shelley Kirkpatrick (United States)
Andreas Schleicher (CERI/OECD)

Observers and Guests

Masashi Akiba (Japan)
Jaap Scheerens (Network C Chair)
John Hansen (United States/IIE)
Georges Lemaître (CERI/OECD)

Welcome

Dra. Helena Mendes welcomed participants to the Network A meeting on behalf on the mayor of Sintra. Dra. Mendes expressed interest in the Network's endeavors and discussed the relevance of the Network's activities for towns such as Sintra. The Network's strategy, she explained, will help provide information needed to continue improving the education system.

Mrs. Gertrudes Amaro also welcomed participants to the meeting and conveyed a welcome message on behalf of the President of the Institute for Educational Innovation (IIE). She stated that she was extremely pleased that the meeting was being held in Sintra and stated that she hoped the meeting was productive.

OCED Secretariat Update

Andreas Schleicher briefly reviewed the status of the strategy paper. He stated that the paper would be discussed later in the plenary session. Based on those discussions, revisions to the paper would be made immediately following the meeting, in time for it to be submitted to the CERI Governing Board and Education Committee for their meetings in April.

The main areas of concern were the following:

- the emphasis and urgency placed on the CCC element of the strategy;
- the costs associated with the strategy;
- the target age and sampling approach;
- the relationships among the Board of Participating Countries, Network A, and the INES Steering Group;
- ownership of instruments and data; and
- the use of advanced testing technology.

The anticipated timeline for the strategy and Terms of Reference is as follows:

- the initial meeting of the Board of Participating countries will be May 7 and 8 in Budapest;
- in June, the OECD Secretariat will submit the Terms of Reference to OECD Legal Services to create the final Terms of Reference that is to be put out for tender;
- in early September, the Terms of Reference will be put out for tender; and
- in December, proposals from bidders will be received and evaluated by the Board, which will recommend to OECD if a contract should be awarded and to which bidder.

He reminded the Network representatives to make the Secretariat aware of potential bidders who should receive the Terms of Reference when it is put out to tender. Also, he stated that the decision to participate in the data strategy effort should be made in the Education Committee; therefore, Network A representatives should make sure their representatives on the Education Committee are aware of this and prepared when they attend the meeting in April.

Andreas then provided updates on the Steering Group, Technical Group, and other Networks. The Steering Group is chaired by Tom Alexander and currently has representatives from Finland, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Membership on the Steering Group will rotate among countries. The Technical Group is currently working on the ISCED revision. Network B is proceeding with the mitigation of data; it has chosen as priority areas school-to-work, lifelong learning, and continuing education and training. Network C continues to coordinate with Network A on the school context questionnaire. Network D has proposed a pilot study of a teacher survey on attitudes toward education.

With respect to OECD/INES publications, the annual schedule remains for producing an indicator report and analysis report. These two reports will have stability in terms of the indicators reported. Additionally, a publication providing new information is planned to be produced every other year.

The publication schedule for the upcoming *EAG* is quite tight. Data preparation will be continuing until the end of May. The first draft of the indicators is scheduled to be provided to countries for their review in June and the National Coordinators are due to receive *EAG* by July 4. Andreas emphasized that only about a week will be available for countries to review the indicators. To help accommodate this short turnaround, countries will be told shortly the exact dates for the review.

The second wave of data collection for IALS is currently being carried out in 15 countries. A scoring meeting is scheduled for April or May.

Data Strategy Issues

The Network discussed how to respond to each of the issues that were brought up at the Education Committee and CERI Governing Board meetings. A summary of the response is as follows:

<u>The emphasis on CCC</u>

Andreas prepared and the Network reviewed a draft response, as follows:

(1) *Aiming for a full assessment of the three domains in the survey cycle.* It is the objective of the strategy to develop an instrument for the comprehensive assessment of the three domains in the survey cycle, in terms of content, processes, attitudes, behaviors, and habits. For example, the reading assessment should cover a range of reading purposes and text domains including literary reading, reading for learning and document reading as well as processes such as locating information, extracting relevant information from text, following reasoning, understanding an underlying message, developing an interpretation, personal reflection and response and demonstrating a critical stance. Accordingly, each data collection would include what has been described in earlier Network A documents as curriculum-focused and cross-curricular elements.

(2) *Capitalizing on advances in the assessment of CCCs.* As the technology for assessing CCCs develops over time, we will draw upon those advances and incorporate them into our design and methodology. To this end, Network A will maintain relationships with others who are performing similar work and developing relevant assessment technology (e.g., the Life Skills work and IEA civics study) and will create mechanisms to ensure that Network A is informed on a regular basis of their efforts. Accordingly, a budget line has been included in the Network A strategy that is earmarked for CCC/Life Skill integration and that allows for the continued development of the strategy by including methods for methodological innovations on CCCs.

(3) *Piloting CCC instruments*. In addition, Network A will utilize (finalize) those components of the CCC developmental work undertaken so far by Network A that can be implemented in the initial assessment cycle as an international option in the student questionnaire.

(4) *Pursuing developmental work.* While the above steps are intended to facilitate the integration of existing CCC methodology into the strategy, Network A also proposes to continue the development of CCCs with selective participation by OECD Member countries and with a separate budget. It is proposed to focus initially on the development of a problem solving instrument, capitalizing on the synergy with developmental efforts in the Life Skills project. In the long term, as assessment and evaluation of the range of CCC competencies and instruments will be made as a precursor to further developmental work.

Cost

Significant time has been invested into maximizing the compatibility between the study design and management process and the associated costs.   The Network can state with confidence that the current study design, management process, and costs are the optimal arrangement for providing high quality, policy relevant indicators on a regular basis.

Target Age

The Board will need to make the final decision about whether 15- or 16-year-olds should be sampled. Countries will have the option of supplementing the age-based sample so that a grade estimate can be calculated; the cost of this national option or other national options will be borne by the country. Additionally, countries will have the option of collecting data on 13-year-old students, which will have many advantages, including cohort analyses.

Relationships among the Board of Participating Countries, Network A, and the INES Steering Group

It is the Network's understanding that the Steering Group will have the overall responsibility of directing the INES activities, which includes overseeing Network A. Within Network A, there are three efforts: (1) the plenary function, (2) the Analysis and Presentation of Outcome Indicators (APOI) group, and (3) the data strategy, for which the Board of Participating countries will have responsibility of overseeing its implementation. The Board of Participating countries will have the right to make implementation decisions for the data strategy according to the parameters outlined in the strategy paper.

Ownership of instruments and data

In line with the principle of collaboration, public ownership of data and instruments will be required. With respect to data ownership, it is reiterated that each country will receive its own national data as soon as it has been processed; national data will not be released until each member has been given an opportunity to review and comment on its data and until the release of the data has been approved by the national authorities. A deadline and procedures for withdrawing one's data from international publication will be decided upon; withdrawn data will not be made available to other countries. Data from all countries represented in the international

publication will be made available to participating countries. With respect to instrument ownership, the primary concern is maintaining the integrity of the instruments in order to permit calculation of trends over time. At the present time, it is anticipated that approximately half of the items will be released to the public and the remaining items will be retained for trend purposes. Additionally, the instruments will be made available to other countries who wish to use them and who can securely administer the instruments.

The use of advanced testing technology

The data strategy effort will make use of advanced testing technology to the extent possible and will continue to explore and adopt, as soon as feasible, such technology. The strategy will call for the implementation of technological advances as soon as they prove reliable and valid in other large scale assessment programs and feasible within our context.

Modifications based on the above responses will be integrated into the strategy paper and the Terms of Reference.

Additionally, Network representatives provided national cost estimates and many countries revised their estimates at the meeting. These estimates will be provided to the CERI Governing Board and Education Committee.

APOI Update

The first meeting of the Analysis and Presentation of Indicators (APOI) group was held in January in Paris. Aletta Grisay prepared a draft outline of the Analysis Plan, with input from Andreas Schleicher. The Network reviewed and commented on the outline. The issue of a minimum number of countries needed to publish an indicator was discussed.   In general, the Network agreed that, in line with previous indicators, the minimum probably falls somewhere between 7 and 9 countries, although exceptions should be made depending on the value of the data.

The APOI group met immediately following the plenary session to discuss how to revise the outline based on discussions at the plenary session. It will then meet in Budapest on May 5-6. The anticipated course of action that the APOI group will hire a consultant to prepare the Analysis Plan based on the final outline that has been prepared by the APOI group with input from the Network.

Draft Terms Of Reference

The draft Terms of Reference was discussed. It will be revised based on discussion at the plenary session and then submitted as an Annex in the strategy paper to the CERI Governing Board and Education Committee. Assuming a positive reaction from the Governing Board and Education Committee, it will be revised once more by the Board of Participating Countries at the Budapest meeting in May, submitted to OECD Legal Services so that it can be turned into a tender, and then will be sent out for tender in September.   The Board will need to decide on the

exact criteria and the weighting for the criteria. The Board then will recommend an award to OECD Legal Services.

The Terms of Reference will be modified and clarified to reflect the following points:

- the contract is for the first cycle (i.e., reading) only;

- two international options will be made clear -- (1) collecting data on the self-perception scale that the CCC group used in its feasibility study and (s) collecting data for 13-year-olds;

- the terms *knowledge and skills* will be clarified;

- the section on anticipated outcomes will be deleted;

- the contractor will be asked to recommend ways of reporting data that include basic, complex, and trend indicators, and ways of developing and reporting results according to proficiency levels;

- the use of TIMSS items for the minor domains data collection will be clarified;

- it will be clarified that the separate CCC development work will be done under a separate budget;

- it will be clarified that the Secretariat will act as the agent of the Board;

- the contractor will be asked to recommend how work in the Southern hemisphere *will be conducted and to recommend methods for ensuring that the translation is of the highest quality;

- the contractor will be asked to provide an activity-based budget that includes all options as separate line items; and

- Annexes providing necessary background information will be added and will include the data strategy paper, the draft APOI Analysis Plan.

Joint Session with Network C Subgroup

Jaap Scheerens and members of the Network C subgroup on school process indicators joined the Network for an afternoon session to provide input to Network A regarding the school context questionnaire. Jaap updated Network A on Network C's school survey. It is completed by the head teacher in the school, takes about 45 minutes to complete, and includes items such as the type of school, the number of students in each grade, the number of classes in each grade, staffing arrangements, admittance criteria, and the number of buildings.

Suggestions for topics that Network A may want to focus on in its school context questionnaire include provisions or facilities available for assessing students, the total amount of teaching time, teaching philosophy, leadership, and teachers' time allocation between administrative and teaching duties. Areas of focus in the student context questionnaire could be opportunity to learn, time on the task, teaching processes.

Having a common core of items that could be linked to Network C's school survey may be a valuable approach to take. Jaap also noted that many different operationalizations may occur for some of these topics. One way of choosing items would be to produce an item bank containing the time it would take to complete each item.

To proceed with deciding on topics and items for the context questionnaires, Eugene suggested that some Network C (and possibly Network D) representatives attend the May APOI meeting to help them outline that portion of the Analysis Plan.

CCC Development

Jules Peschar announced that the publication *Prepared for Life* is currently in the final stages of publication and should be available very soon. He presented a summary of the CCC group's work to date and proposed how to continue this developmental work.

Out of the four topics that were included in the CCC feasibility studies, two were promising and two would require much more developmental work. For one of the promising scales – civics – the IEA Civics Study is examining similar topics. To avoid duplication of effort, it is recommended that the CCC group provide its civics items to the Civics study. For the other promising scale – self-perception – the data strategy will have an international option for including it in the initial data collection. (It also should be noted that the data strategy includes cross-curricular elements as an integral part of the strategy.)

The remaining two scales – communication and problem solving – will require additional developmental work before they can be integrated into the data strategy. To focus resources and efforts, it is proposed that, in the intermediate term, the problem solving domain be developed further, which will require the use of consultants and experts, and will require additional feasibility testing. The development of the communication domain will have to occur at some point in the future.

In the long-term, the CCC group sees promise in the Swiss proposal to conduct conceptual work and plans on contributing to that initiative in whatever capacity would be useful.

A proposal for continuing the CCC work according to the above plan will be submitted to the Education Committee and CERI Governing Board.

Fall 1997 Meeting

The Fall 1997 Network A meeting probably will take place in Salzberg in April. Once the exact dates are more clear, the Network members will be updated.